SMITHSONIAN
LIBRARIES

Cooper Union Museum Library

PS 751 .A11

OLD RUSSIAN ART

L. Piatovski

100

NK
975
E96
CHM

///
EXHIBITION

OF

NATIONAL RUSSIAN ART

17th, 18th and Early 19th Centuries /

Peasant embroideries, costumes, headdresses,
hand-woven materials, laces, ikons, articles of
silver, copper, etc.

Shown by Count and Countess B. M. Pushkin

Setting from the design of L. Pianovsky

THE selection here presented contains mainly rare specimens of old national typical embroideries, weavings and laces of Velikorossia (Great Russia), very rich in original primitive designs and ornaments, brightly reflecting the Russian folk's genius and offering, in addition to the archeological interest, an unlimited source of patterns for artistic industry.

The antique Russian ornament has its source in the remotest antiquity and it is precisely in the national embroidery that we find some samples echoing the heathen cult of almost prehistorical time. Such models were transmitted by tradition from one generation to another. It is but gradually that the tenor of ornaments devolves into those of later periods, up to the epoch of Peter the Great, which had sensibly affected the subject of scenes and costumes treated.

The Russian people have been always fond of adorning not only their costumes but also the articles of their simple household, which were mostly manufactured by domestic means, among these sheets and towels became the most prominent features of the industry and used to serve not only their direct purposes but also in solemn cases for decorative and ceremonial services.

For instance, a figured hanging edge of a sheet, covering a border of a bed, a cart, a sledge, or a bench, served as an ornament, and a towel besides this served also at ceremonials as a wedding present from friends or relations of the wedded or as a gift to the church, where they adorned ikons and crosses,—a custom having its source in olden times, since the heathen cult, when tissues and towels used to serve as oblations and were hung upon sacred trees.

The ornamental embroideries often contain, besides geometrical figures, some designs very similar to those on manuscripts of the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, which doubtless had a special symbolical meaning, afterward lost, as for instance, a species of a sacred tree with two fantastic animals standing by it and facing each other, or human figures with arms lifted up, which was a usual religious gesture of all ancient people, or scenes representing idols and offerings; conventional lions, monoceroses—symbol of spiritual purity;

eagles symbolizing victory, peacocks—eternity and a good omen; cock as symbol of activity and, at last, the bird, “Sirin”, that existed in medieval legends of W. Europe. According to the Russian legends, the bird “Sirin” is a bird of paradise, coming sometimes on the earth and singing Heavenly songs comforting human beings, etc.; according to a superstition, it is an omen of good luck.

One of the favorite symbolic signs was “Svastick”, a token of good wishes and safeguard from danger, represented by an anchoral cross (*croix ancree*), which can be found on ancient articles of India, Syria, China, and which has obviously come to us from the East. For instance, in the material of Kazan’s Tartars and the embroideries of Tamboff.

Later realistic subjects were architectural motives, such as palaces, churches, or hunting scenes, county landscapes and people in corresponding costumes.

The material for making these articles was mainly the product of home industry. The linens and thread were made and dyed. Silk, gold, silver, ribbons, purchased cloth, etc., were used but seldom.

Many of these wonderful embroideries years ago were created by peasant women somewhere far away, in villages lost amidst endless forests and fields, inside cottages disappearing under snow the most part of the year, and this work done by a scanty light of burning chip (*Lootcheena*).

How carefully did the peasant woman compose her pattern of images which pleased her in the surrounding nature,—is a matter of record. She instinctively styled them or reproduced those she got by tradition, by diversifying them by her own taste and fancy and various technique. These elements cause us to consider such embroidery as an independent primitive art.

The articles at this show are mainly of the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries.

This collection is the result of a tenacious labour of accumulating during many years the quite disappearing articles of ancient national embroideries in the forlorn corners of spacious Russia and was gathered by a known collector of Russian antiquities, Mrs. N. de Shabelsky, and kept in France, where she spent her remaining years, until 1905.

Many of these articles were partly exhibited in Russia as well as abroad, in France at the Exposition in 1900, at Chicago in 1893, at Antwerp and Brussels in 1894, and repeatedly in Russia in 1890-1891 in the grand duke Nicholas' palace in Petersburg and during the coronation of the Emperor Nicholas II, in spacious halls of the historical museum in Moscow.

Afterwards a certain part of these exhibits were quoted in a special edition of the magazine "Studio" in 1912, entitled "Peasant Art in Russia".

Panel No. 1

Nos. 1-7

Decorative edges of bed-sheets found in northern provinces of Great Russia, embroidered with colored thread upon homemade linen with various stitches.

Govnt of Novgorod No. 1

Govnt of Olonetz Nos. 2,3,4,6,7,

Govnt of Vologda No. 5,

No. 4—both sides needle-work without reverse. The design reproduces alternate ornamental species of vegetation and buildings, something like pagodas, with two human figures inside; one of these holds a sacrificial bird in his hand.

Panel No. 2

Nos. 8-12

Bed-sheets' edges of same type.

Novgorod 8,10,

Petrograd 9,11,

Pskov 12,

No. 10—the pattern is a very ancient device of octangular ornamental form, with sacred trees and birds.

Panel No. 3

Nos. 13-28

Decorative edges of towels of northern provinces with typical subjects met with at those places, being embroidered, mainly a double stitch, without reverse.

No. 23—distinctly prominent on account of its archaic design, representing an idol holding the bridles of horses with two other idols mounted on them.

Nos. 14 and 17 are entered in a special copy of "Studio", 1912, in its articles, "Peasant art in Russia" sub. Nos. 79, 93.

Panel No. 4

Nos. 29-51

Shoulder-pieces of Olonetz province—or decorative insertions put in sleeves of the smock; these are remarkable for the fine technique of the embroidery and noted for their original geometrical ornaments.

Panel No. 5

Nos. 52-60

Decorative edges of bed-sheets and towels of northern provinces embroidered with multicolor silk replacing the drawn-thread of linen; these are very rare.

Yaroslavl 52,54,

Kostroma 53,58,

Nijni-Novgorod 59,60,

Tver 55,57,

*purchased by the
Cleveland Museum*

*purchased by the
Boston and Cleveland Museums*

Nos. 61-66
*purchased by the
Brooklyn Museum*

Nos. 67-77
*purchased by the
Cleveland Museum*

Nos. 78-87
*purchased by the
Cleveland Museum*

Nos. 87-90

No. 91

No. 91-116

Nos. 117-122

Panel No. 6

Edges of bed-sheets of same localities and technique, used for decorative purposes and for solemn occasions.

Panel No. 7

Decorative edges of towels made of bobbin laces in white or colored silk or gold.

Nijni-Novgorod 67,68,69,72,76,

Kostroma 70,

Tver 71,73,77,

Orel 74,75,

No. 76—see "Studio" sub No. 73.

Panel No. 8

Decorative edges of silk, batiste and linen towels embroidered with colored silk and gold.

Nijni-Novgorod 78,79,80,

Tver 81,82,83,84,

Kalouga 85,86,87,

This needle-work of Nijni-Novgorod and Kalouga provinces dates the beginning of the 19th century and that of Tver—the 18th.

Panel No. 9

Women's holiday head-dresses from Nijni-Novgorod province, gold embroidery on silk tissue; worn in 18th century and in the beginning of the 19th.

Panel No. 10

A long veil or wedding head dress of silk and gold, with golden doubleheaded eagles woven in the four corners.

Panel No. 11

Ends of towels collected in northern provinces of Great-Russia with variety of ornamental designs.

Panel No. 12

Decorative edges of bed-sheets of bobbin lace.

Vologda 117,119,

Nijni-Novgorod 118. See "Studio"

"Peasant Art in Russia" No. 60.

Orel 120,121,122,

Nos. 123-126
*purchased by the
Brooklyn Museum*

Panel No. 13

Decorative borders of bed-sheets embroidered in a way adopted in northern parts of Great Russia: drawn-thread ground is embroidered in various stitches which make the design.

No. 124 is marked by the fineness of the work and the original flower ornaments. No. 125 represents a drive in a carriage and people in costumes of the 18th century.

Kostroma 123, 124, 126,

Moskow 125,

Panel No. 14

Nos. 127-129

Decorative edges of bed-sheets embroidered on hand made netting and drawn-thread linen, from the northern parts of Great Russia.

Landscapes with buildings, hunting scenes and people in costumes of the 18th century serve for pattern.

No. 127—very rare specimen, see "Studio" No. 72.

Panel No. 15

Nos. 130-133

Decorative ends of bed-sheets, embroidered on drawn-thread linen with figures of animals and architectural designs.

Novgorod 130, 132, 133,

Pskov 131,

No. 130 bears the image of two big lions beside a sacred tree.

No. 131 has in a circle of branches a big conventional flower with two stags at its sides supported by branches.

Panel No. 16

Nos. 134-137

Decorative ends of bed-sheets embroidered on hand-made netting and drawn-thread.

Yaroslavl 134,

Vladimir 135,

Moscow 136, 137,

No. 134 is adorned with an ornamental tree and women figures below and two doubleheaded eagles and two peacocks as a token of longevity and felicity.

Panel No. 17

Nos. 138-141

Articles of religious worship of velvet and silk richly embroidered with gold and silver. Shoulder pieces of sacerdotal vestments of the 17th century.

A conventional flora motive prevails in the embroidery of these, No. 110 to be excepted, being embroidery with ancient high stitch and representing two lions at the sides of a tree, and amongst branches and flowers, some unicorns, griffons, stags and birds.

Panel No. 18

Nos. 142-149

Shoulder-pieces of sacerdotal vestments and chalice veils of the 17th and 18th centuries.

No. 142—Shoulder-piece of the 17th century gold and silver embroidered in ancient stitches. The pattern is composed of conventional pomegranates and flowers.

No. 143—A veil of the chalice of the 17th century with an embroidered agnus (host) in the chalice, surrounded by angels and cherubs, bordered with prayers, see "Studio" 1912 in the article "Peasant Art in Russia"—No. 111.

No. 144—A veil of the 17th century, with an image of the miraculous apparition of the Blessed Virgin.

No. 145—Same, picturing mount Calvary, strung with mother of pearl, bordered with ancient golden lace.

No. 148—Liturgical "star" with an embroidered image of Our Lady amid apostles. See "Studio" 1912 No. 113.

No. 149—Shoulder-piece of sacerdotal vestment.

Panel No. 19

Nos. 150-166

Parts of women's headdresses of the northern provinces of Great Russia, different ornaments embroidered with gold and silver, 18th century.

Panel No. 20

Nos. 168-173

Borders of wedding towels from Kostroma province of golden laces; such towels used to be made of muslin and tulle with richly decorated edges and were worn over the head-dress as a "fata" (long and wide veil).

4 Panels

Nos. 21, 22, 23, 24,

Nos. 175-223

Samples of "Noboyka" or hand printed linen, 17th and 18th centuries. Such tissues were used for vestments, table-cloth, window and bed curtains, for tents, book-binding and sometimes for sacerdotal vestments.

This way of dying tissues (by means of carved wooden printing block) was known to be in use in Russia as

early as in the 12th century, and many ornaments on samples gathered here doubtless belong to earlier times.

Series No. 224 to 243

Women's holiday garments from Great Russia of the 18th century. These garments always were distinct by their variety and sumptuousness. The 4 garments represented here give an idea of the general type of them.

Series No. 244 to No. 261

Women's head dresses of the 18th century.

As the most conspicuous part of the garments these were adorned with particular care, as far as possible by rich embroidery with gold, pearls, chipped mother of pearl, beads and stones.

Various extravagant forms, distinct in different localities; A woman used to cover her head completely, as it was considered a lack of modesty on part of a married woman to keep her head unveiled, whereas a maid had her head-dress in style of crown, diadem or wreath, leaving the hair uncovered.

Novgorod	244,255,
Olonetz	252,253,257,
Kostroma	249,256,261,
Yaroslavl	245,
Moscow	260,246,248,
Tver	250,254,
Tambov	258,
Orel	247,
Tula	251,

Nos. 262-263

Two ancient dolls, 18th century.

Nos. 264-265

Dolls head-dresses.

Series No. 266 to No. 279 and No. 280 to No. 290

Small articles of women's attire, such as hand bags, purses, perfume-bottle cases, "poroutchni" or ornamental cuffs, richly embroidered trinkets on ribbons twisted in girls braid, etc. 17th and 18th centuries.

Series Nos. 291-296

Women's head-wear square cloths, 18th and 19th centuries woven and embroidered with gold.
No. 292—the date 1814 being interwoven in it.

Panel No. 25

Nos. 297-342

*purchased by the
Boston and Cleveland Museums*

Decorative ends of towels and series of small embroideries, which were used for inserting in ribbons for adorning women's head-dresses in Tambov province; this is to be seen on girls head-dress No. 258.

These embroideries stitched with silk and gold, mainly a double-stitch, are of interest on account of their geometrical ornaments, with abundant appliance of "Svastick", which is typical of this locality and at the same time proves the unfailing influence of the Orient.

Panel No. 26

Nos. 343-359

Decorative borders of bed-sheets and towels of Tartars from Kazan, hand-woven on home made looms with multicolor threads silk and gold. Typical Oriental designs.

Panel No. 27

Nos. 360-371

Parts of edges of cassocks in Little Russia (Ukraine) embroidered with coloured silk and gold on linen, with various floral ornaments,—a typical Ukrainian embroidery of the 18th century.

Panel No. 28

Nos. 372-383

Table-cloths and towels of Crimean Tartars stitched with silk and gold.

Series Nos. 384-387

Women's aprons from Vologda province, wholly covered with embroidery, interesting for their typical ornaments on the edges.

Series Nos. 388-391

Towels from Little Russia, used for wedding ceremonials. Such towels served as gifts by the bride to the bride-groom's relations or for covering the dish with a loaf of bread when the newly wedded were to be blessed, or to be tied over the shoulder of kinsmen, grooms-men and brides-maids at the ceremonials in question.

Series Nos. 392-395

Decorative lace borders of bed-sheets.

Collection of Princess B. Sidamon Eristoff
and Mademoiselle N. de Shabelsky,
28 rue Chateaufort, Nice, France.

No. 396

Border of fine fleece wool hand-woven shawl, made by peasant-slaves, employed in husbandry of county-squire Kolokoltzoff, of the time of Alexander I—the beginning of the 19th century.

This finest art of technical execution and coloring of designs is typical of that epoch.

Owing to the extreme cost of this production (the weaving of some shawls, scarfs etc. took from one to three years) it did exist but a few years, and left us, very rare but unique, specimens of beautiful high art, that existed only in Russia,

and other antique embroideries and different silver articles from the collection of
L. Pianovsky
5, Villa Stendhal, Paris.

Nos. 397-399

Shoulder-pieces of sacerdotal vestments, silver and gold embroidered on velvet. 18th century.

No. 400

Coffer of bone, engraved and sculptured, Emperor Peter I's epoch, the beginning of 18th century, made by peasants of Archangel province.

No. 401

Carved comb of 18th century—the time of Empress Catherine II, made by peasants of Archangel province.

No. 402

purchased

Wooden box for jewels covered with forged and hollowed iron, made by peasants of northern provinces, 18th century.

No. 403

Wooden painted weaving instrument, work of peasants of northern provinces, 18th century.

Nos. 404-406

Carved wood crosses and ikons, made by peasants of northern provinces, 18th century.

No. 407

purchased

Ikon of St. Nicholas made of copper and enameled by master peasants, 18th century.

No. 408

Triptich of Christ with the Blessed Virgin and St. John the Baptist, made of copper and enameled, 18th century.

- purchased* No. 409 Ikon on wood with an inlaid cross and polyptique of enameled copper, 18th century.
- No. 410 Ikon of St. Nicholas, 17th century.
- No. 411 Ikon "The Resurrection", 17th century.
- No. 412 Big travelling Church, 15 panels, 17th century.
- No. 413 Small travelling Church, 17th century.
and other ikons and crosses painted on wood and made of copper by master-peasants in the 17th and 18th centuries.
- No. 414 Cup with cover—sculptured of cocoa-nut with silver, 18th century.
- purchased* No. 415 Ear-rings in silver with stones, 18th century,
and other different silver articles from the collection of
A. Zolotnitzky "A la Vielle Russie"
18, Faubourg St. Honore, Paris.
- No. 416 Silver snuff box, Empress Catherine II.
- No. 417 Ivory snuff box, Emperor Paul I and Empress Mary Theodorovna,
and other different silver articles from the collection of
M. Arafeloff
15 Rue Godot de Mauroy, Paris.
- No. 418 Ikon of the apparition of Our Lady to St. Serge, with glass bead embroidered vestments,—a monastery work of the end of the 17th century.
and different silver articles from the collection of Prince Kourakin
38, Rue de Berri, Paris.

The majority of the ikons painted on wood are of the School of Moscow of the 17th century, and the silver articles, cups, goblets, snuff boxes, needle-cases, etc., were made by peasant-silversmiths at Ustug (Vologda province) and Moskow province in the 17th and 18th centuries, epoch of Tsar Alexis, Peter I and Catherine II.

See No. 127

See No. 27

See Panel No. 18

See No. 254

See No. 263

See No. 176

See No. 180

See No. 396

See No. 400

See No. 407

See No. 410

See No. 414

See No. 416

See No. 415

L. P. Ivanovskij

INFORMATION

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

0 021 286 953 3